

FIRE INVESTIGATOR

DISTINGUISHING FEATURES OF THE CLASS: Investigates fire or explosions to determine their cause and origin, identifies suspects and assists the District Attorney's Office and other Law Enforcement Agencies in prosecuting arson crimes. Performs fire safety inspections for various county agencies. Under the general supervision of the Senior Fire Investigator, performs on scene fire investigation and interviews persons having knowledge of the fire. Works directly with the District Attorney's Office or other Law Enforcement agencies to perform criminal investigations regarding arson fires. Shall be sworn as a Peace Officer under the laws of the State of New York. Does related duties as required.

TYPICAL WORK ACTIVITIES:

Responds to fires and explosions at the request of fire departments, law enforcement agencies or other governmental agencies;
Performs an immediate investigation as to the causative factors surrounding the incident;
Operates scientific instruments used to determine the presence of flammable liquids;
Identifies clues and collects physical evidence;
Interviews all persons known to be connected with the discovery or extinguishment of the incident;
Identifies possible motives and/or suspects;
Makes investigative notes and writes reports concerning all aspects of the incident and follow-up investigation;
Confers with the District Attorney's Office regarding case evaluation and prospects for prosecution, issuance of arrest and search warrants;
Prepares assigned cases for court, according to formalized procedures;
Testifies in criminal and civil courts as directed by proper authority;
Works with insurance companies, under direction of the Senior Fire Investigator, in civil cases involving incendiary fires;
Provides technical assistance to other agencies;
May be required to perform the duties of a Peace Officer as authorized by law;
Participates in county-wide activities such as major investigations, including surveillance, neighborhood canvasses, etc. Performs fire safety inspections.

FULL PERFORMANCE KNOWLEDGES, SKILLS, ABILITIES AND PERSONAL CHARACTERISTICS:

Working knowledge of building construction, building materials and their effect on fire spread;

Working knowledge of basic investigative procedures; and surveillance techniques;
Basic knowledge of human motivation and behavior patterns related to false alarms, fire, explosions and incendiarism;
Working knowledge of fire's effect on buildings, vehicles and contents thereof;
Basic knowledge of explosive and explosion characteristics;
Working knowledge of laws governing search, seizure and evidence to include its admissibility and the suspects constitutional rights;
Basic knowledge of legal prosecution, case preparation procedures associated with the performance of his duties;
Basic knowledge of laboratory requirements for processing evidence;
Working knowledge of arrest procedures;
Skill in taking statements and confessions;
Ability to diagram and operate basic photography equipment with reasonable skill under various conditions;
Ability to recognize, protect and seize evidence and the proper identification procedures thereof;
Ability to determine the perpetrator's method of entry;
Ability of how to determine the point of origin of a fire, its probable cause, interpreting char and burn patterns and ability to reconstruct the fire scene;
Basic knowledge of the purpose of various property documents such as leases, deeds, liens, garnishments, judgements, etc.; and their importance in arson investigation;
Knowledge of which agencies may provide assistance in fire investigation activities;
Knowledge of courtroom procedures and the judicial system;
Ability to work with other agencies and jurisdictions;
Working knowledge of general fire safety code requirements and regulations including but not limited to trash debris, smoking, open burning, maintaining fire department access, housekeeping procedures and limiting combustible decorations and furnishings;
Knowledge of fire hazards related to various types of heating and cooking equipment.

MINIMUM QUALIFICATIONS:

- A) Four years service as a firefighter on a volunteer or paid fire department; and two years experience in the field of fire investigation either in the public or private sector; and

Shall have satisfactorily completed the Arson Awareness and Cause and Origin Determination programs; and Shall complete the Fire/Arson 2 week course at the New York State Fire Academy as soon as possible after appointment; and

Shall complete the Peace Officers training course certified by the NYS Bureau for Municipal Police as soon as possible after appointment; OR

- B) Graduation from a regionally accredited or NYS registered college or university with an associates degree in fire protection and two years experience as a firefighter and one year of experience in fire investigation plus, completion of the above mentioned training programs.

SPECIAL REQUIREMENT: Possession of a valid NYS drivers license. Shall complete the NYS Code Enforcement Practices course within one year of appointment.